AA 1021. h. 26.

CAVEAT,
OR
INFORMATION,

For { *Informers*, *Witnesses*, *and* *Judges*.

(Not printed till now) useful for this present time of *REFORMATION*;

Delivered in a Sermon at *Preston* in *Lancashire*, the first Wednesday in *July*, 1647. before an Assembly of *Divines*, and *Deputie-Lieutenants*.

By *Henry Jenney* Mr. of Arts, now Vicar of St. *Michaels* in the said County.

Non vult te Deus, si fortè videris peccatum fratris tui continuò evolare ad publicum, & proclamare passim, & divulgare aliena peccata, quod esset utique non corrigentis, sed potius infamantis, solus inquit inter te & ipsum corripe eum. Vti enim servari sibi pudoris mysterium viderit ille qui peccat, servabit & ipse emendationis pudorem, si verò diffamari se viderit, illicò ad denegandum impudenter convertetur, ut non solum non emendaveris peccatum, sed & duplicaveris. Origen in Mat.

Nihil perdat spiritualem virum, sicut peccati alieni tractatio, quam libentissimè ejus potius quam insultationem, potiúsque auxilia quam convitia meditatus, & quantum fraternis tribuit, suscipit. Aug. in Ep. ad Gal.

Odia habentur peccata non homines; corripiantur tumidi, tolleretur infirmi, & qui diversis vestibus, diversis est, non saevientis plectatur animus, sed medentis.

LONDON, Printed by *S. G.* for *Tho. Firby* next *Grayes-Inne* Gate. 1656.

CAVEAT
OR
INFORMATION,

For { Informers, / Whistlers, and / Tale-bearers.

(Not printed till now) useful for this present time of REFORMATION;

Delivered in a Sermon at Preston in Lancashire, the 5th Wednesday in July, 1654. before an Assembly of Gentlemen and Deputies.

By Henry Yates, M.A. now Vicar of St. Michaels in the Land Country.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

Lord Lambert &c.

RIGHT HONOURABLE.

ALthough neither my person, nor condition can any way merit ought at your *Lordships* hands, yet the high and undeserved favours I have already received, and the benign aspect which your *Honour* hath been alwayes observed to afford unto the *Devoires* of such as have attempted to do but the meanest good service in Gods Church and Common-wealth; together with the *Candor* and *sweetness* which accompanies all your actions, rendring you precious to all that know you; hath thus far emboldened me in all humility to crave, that * *This same foolishness of preaching* here

* Δια τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος Θ, &c. 1 Cor. 1. 22.

here inscribed, which notwithstanding is the wisdom and power of God to salvation, may march under your *Lordships name*, as under *Ajax* his shield, into the view of the World; which favour if I shall happily obtain, then as the Mariners who carried with them *Cæsar* and his fortunes; or as the Souldiers that advanced under the victorious eye and protection of *Titus*, son to *Vespasian*; I doubt not, maugre all malice, prejudice and opposition, but to become in this present service both succesfull and prosperous; For which my instant requests shall not cease to be presented before the Throne of *Grace*, that the spirit of *Magnanimity*, wisdom, and understanding may still rest upon your Immortall Soul, and so direct your *Honour* in all your grave, and great imployments, for the common good and Church of *God here*, that in the end, he may receive you out of this ἀκκλησία, into his Church triumphant, the place of eternall rest and Glory.

Your Lordships most humble, and most devoted, of all those that honour you,

Ben. Jonson.

To the Honourable Major Gen. *Worsley*, Col. *West*, Ma. *Robinson*, and the rest of the Commissioners appointed by his Highness for *Lancashire*.

GENTLEMEN,

ALthough no doubt you have already received abundant satisfaction for your preparation to the weighty work of Reformation in hand, by an Eloquent Apollos, *a man so mighty in the word of God, yet I hope it will not be a work altogether superfluous, to put this* ὑπόμνημα *(though so plain) into your hands, for the help sometimes of your memory, if it may not serve at present, as a Card or Compass whereby to steer your course in the current of your weighty affairs. To govern well was ever accounted* Ars artium, *and to judge aright now at this time especially,* De rebus & personis Ecclesiasticis, *I fear will prove a matter of no small difficulty. But I hope that* καρδιογνώστης, *who searcheth all secrets, will inable you with his discerning Spirit to uncase such Hypocrites (if any such there be) as under a pretext of zeal to this your design, may peradventure take advantage to effect their own long-plotted sinister ends, in the defamation, and destruction of their innocent Brethren.*

Mr. Geer

WHat Salt soever they shall cause to be brought before you, Mat. 5. 13. *made foul by some accident all fall, or their fowler tongues; yet having not lost all its savour, let it not be cast out to be trodden under their feet; but rather as good* Chymists *endeavour its recovery and preservation, that out of it you may extract such a* θ *as being well separated from its* Terra damnata, *may serve*

again

again to absterge the foul mouths, and allay the boyling heat of their feverish hearts, that are now grown frantick, and even mad against the poor disconsolate Church of God.

This present, *I cannot say much of it, for there is not much said in it. However, be pleased to deign it your acceptance, if not for the offerer, yet for the oblations sake,* (διὰ τὰ δῶρα) *for it is a work holding forth such words as shall judge us all, even* 1 Thes. 5. 13. *judges, and all, at the last day. Now the Lord grant you may so* Joh. 12. 48. *pull down, and set up, so change, reform, and confirm; so purge and refine, that if it be possible, you may make a* Cœlum terræ, *and so become your selves* Rutilantia Sydera in seculo seculorum:

For which shall be poured out the incessant devotions of your unworthy, but most humble Orator,

HEN. JENNEY.

To

TO THE READER.

THou may'st perhaps admire, that I should be so hardy, as to expose these my Primitias (such jejune Meditations) to the publick view, in this so criticall an Age, but the reasons are ready; He that hath impartially judg'd himself, shall not be judged of the Lord, and why then should he fear the Judgments of men? The meanest talent must not be hid, but be accompted for, if not improv'd; And if this be so censorious a time, it hath the more need of a moderation, and rectification.

When some, more able, through carnall policie will not, or slaviſh fear, dare not administer a word in due season, God, who ordaineth strength out of the mouths of Babes and sucklings, may inable these (though weak) endeavours to become effectuall means, for his own Glory and his Churches good, in such a time of need.

The

The truly jealous (I am sure) will not prejudicate, they are fool-bolts that are so soon shot: And he that is a Nathanael, and sensible of his own feylings, will not be over-rigid against others; They are the Hypocrites, that are the unmercifull Judges. What thou art, or mean'st to do, I know not, but Dilige; & fac quid voles, *it shall be kindly taken by him, who is truly studious of thine eternall good.*

H. Jenney.

EXOD. 23. 1, 2.

Thou shalt not raise a false report, put not thy hand with the wicked, to be an unrighteous witness.

Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evill, neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many to wrest Judgement.

Or, according to another translation, thus,

Thou shalt not receive a false tale, neither shalt thou put thine hand with the wicked to be a false witness. —— Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evill, neither agree in controversie to decline after many, and overthrow the Truth.

NOt to trifle away time, which I know is precious, I will not trouble you with any needless Apologie for my Call to this work, but come immediately to the work it self.

Each verse of my Text, presents to your serious consideration, a double deliberation, to complete your preparation for your proceedings in the weighty businesse in hand. The two former seem more particularly to concern you that are *Witnesses* and *Informers* against your neighbours, *Thou shalt not raise a false report, put not thy hand with the wicked, to be an unrighteous Witness.* The other two belong to you that are *Judges* and *Censors* of the matters, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evill, neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many, to wrest Judgement.*

Here are three sorts of men admonished, { *Informers.* *Witnesses.* *Judges.*

The first, that they make no false report or accusation.

The second, that they do not swear, to confirm the same.

The last, that they do not join together to do evill, that they be not partiall, and so wrest Judgement to the overthrow of the truth.

This is the charge I am to give you. The Lord inable us all to discharge it to his Glory, the reformation, not destruction (if it be his will) of any that have sinned, the vindication of the truth, & all such as are wrongfully accused. And first I begin with *Informers*, and their false reports, or accusations, they being the beginners of mischief, (as their Father the devill was) in the first words of my Text, *Thou shalt not raise a false report.* The sinne of false accusation, scandall, or defamation, you may find it forbidden, and condemned by Law and Gospell both; for the first, see *Levit.* 19. 16. *Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord.* A false report is a degree of Murder, and Murder is a sin that cries aloud in the ears of God for vengeance (as *Abels* and against *Cains*) it is pitty he should escape it, that thirsts after bloud, while he hunts after evill reports, and goes up and down, to gather up defamations, and false accusations against his neighbour, to deprive him of his livelyhood, and of that which is more precious than life it self, (to wit) his good name.

But because perhaps the Law is accounted now by some, (that would be lawless) a thing of no use to believers, see this sin forbidden, and condemned by the Gospell it self, or rather by the Law again revealed in the Gospell, *Luk.* 3. 14. Our Saviour there chargeth the Souldiers, *to do violence to no man, neither to accuse any falsly,* μηδένα συκοφαντήσητε, oppress no man by cunning calumny, or false accusation. I need not give you the etymon, or originall of the word, you may see it in *Plutarch* his συκοφαντίαν. In 2 *Tim.* 3. 3. The Apostle there foretels of such false accusers, and reckons them amongst the most desperate wretches that should come in the most dangerous times; he ranks them with blasphemers, traitors, self-lovers, despisers of good, contemners of God, covetous, and truce-

Novum Test. in int. fuit relatum, v. t. in Nov. ejt Revelatum Basil. Mag.

truce-breakers; Nay, he couples the implacable and unnatural, peace-refusers, and false accusers together, διάβολοι, συκοφάνται, the devill is the Father of lies, and an old accuser, and such wretches as these, as they are of the same nature, so the Apostle calls them by the same name, both διάβολοι the Father and his Children, Satan and his Sons, *Quam bene conveniunt nomina, &c.* they being both spitefull, and false-accusing adversaries, as the words in the originall import. It is a devilish thing then (you see) to be a false *Informer*, or accuser of the brethren, condemned by Law and Gospell both. Let me therefore exhort all, even all that fear God, that love their own lives, and their neighbours, and that truly tender the safety of their precious souls, to beware of raising, or receiving false reports, and malicious accusations; and that for these ensuing reasons. 1. because the Lord, that great Judge of quick and dead, forbids, and utterly condemns all such desperate wickedness, *Thou shalt not raise a false report*, how dar'st thou then raise a false accusation against thy neighbour, and so gainsay, or speak against thy God, who is able to blast thee with one breath of his mouth? who for one report, or murderous accusation against thy brother, is able to pay thee home with as many plagues, as he did rebellious *Pharaoh* for persecuting his chosen. Secondly, consider the heinousness and odiousness of such destructive tongues, they wound, and never make whole again saith *Salomon*, Prov. 26. 22. Such tongues are compared to fire-brands, arrows, and death its self, which to such accursed *Dogs*, is τὸ φοβερώτατον τῶν φοβερῶν, *Aristot.* the most terrible of all terribles, and yet such desperate fools make it but a sport, thus to destroy themselves and others, *Prov.* 26. 18. Nay, to sum up all in a word; such a tongue is set on fire from hell, and sets on fire the whole course of nature; yea, it is a world of wickedness, saith Saint *James* 3. 6. and makes a world of wickedness, as we

Psa. 52. 2.

see at this time, and as experienced *Solomon* tels us, *Prov.* 29. 12. Saying, *If a Ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked*; and therefore to avoid such evill, *David* vowes to cut off all privy slanderers of their neighbours, to give no entertainment to workers of deceit, and resolved, not to let a lyar so much as to tarry in his sight, *Psal.* 101. *v.* 5. & 7. A resolution worthy of so wise and Godly a Prince, God grant it may be a president for every christian prince and Magistrate to imitate. For the contrary is a dangerous and destroying evill, an evill not to be suffered, unless we will hazard the ruine of all; we had need then to give it no liberty at all, but to beware of it, and to make it part of our Letany, (if we may make any Letany at all) with holy *David* saying, *Psal.* 120. 2. *Deliver my soul O Lord from lying lips, and from a deceitfull tongue.* It is dangerous to the Receiver, dangerous to the accused, but most dangerous of all to the accuser himself, for it deprives him of an happy life, 1 *Pet.* 3. 10. *He that will love life, and see good dayes, let him refrain his tongue from evill, and his lips that they speak no guile, let him eschew evill and do goood, seek peace and ensue it*, not make mischief and pursue it; nay, he doth not onely deprive himself of an happy life, but also of a lively faith, for he makes thereby, or at least wise he makes it appear, that his Religion is in vain, *Jam.* 1. 16. He may perhaps, to gratifie his malicious, or avaricious humour, bereave his brother of his naturall life, or worldly wealth, but then withall he wounds his own soul, and robs his soul and body both of their eternall inheritance in heaven, *Prov.* 18. 7. He that hurteth his neighbour by his tongue, woundeth his own soul by his words; *his mouth is his own destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.* To be a false informer, a malicious accuser, and so a pernitious lyar, is the way to become a darling, a favourite to the devill; such are Spaniels to hunt up the devils game, and their own destruction both; The Apostle cals them Reprobates,

probates, *Rom.* 1. 29. That ſhall never inherit the Kingdome of grace here, nor of glory hereafter, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *Know ye not, that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdome of God? be not deceived*, &c. But ſtay, this is not all, for ſuch a wretch he ſhall not onely ſuſtain *pœnam damni*, the loſs of Bliſs, but alſo ſuffer *pœnam ſenſu*, the puniſhment of ſenſe, puniſhment (I ſay) in that place where his torments ſhall be endleſs, *Apocal.* 21. 7, 8. All lyars ſhall have their part in that lake, which burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond. *i. e.* eternall death. But here now (me thinks) I ſee theſe accurſed *Hams*, *Dœgs*, *Achans* and *Abitophels*, laughing in their ſleeves and ſaying, it is no matter what he ſaith, let us have our pleaſures and deſires here, and then let come, what will come, in the world to come. Theſe politique fools, or madmen rather, are like to the *Cardinall*, who wiſhed he might have a part of *Paris*, for his part in Paradiſe. Alas poor ſilly Atheiſts, full little do ye know the extremities of hell torments and tortures due to ſuch damned *Caitiffs*, that thus ſleightly account of them, and deſperately haſten to them; but let not your wiſdomes deceive your ſelves, your hell begins here, even in this life, your life will be worſe than death, for ſuch have no peace; There is no peace ſaith my God to the wicked; the God of truth hath ſaid it, it is in vain for your deceitfull hearts, and lying tongues to deny it, *Iſa.* 57. *v. ult.* Your lying tongues ſhall make you fall, and others to laugh you to ſcorn, *Pſ.* 64. 8. what did I ſay, make you fall? nay, fall to utter ruine, for a falſe witneſs ſhall utterly periſh, *Prov* 21. 28. believe it, it was not a fool that ſaid it, If therefore thou lov'ſt thy life, have a care of thy ſlandering, and falſe accuſing tongue. In old time a ſlanderer by the Law, was to be branded on the cheek for infamy, as accurſed *Cain* was mark'd for a murderer, It were good for the Commonwealth, and Church of God, if all ſuch

miſcreants

miſcreants might be ſo ſtigmatized, for their malicious aſperſions caſt upon the innocent, in theſe malignant and licentious times. If you will not for all this believe, and take heed of this deſtructive ſin, look but into the *Theater* of Gods judgements upon malefactors in this kind. In 6. of *Dan.* ſee how the Princes, Governors, and Captains, conſpired againſt the Prophet, by a malicious accuſation to take away his life; and although their information was partly true, yet becauſe it was done in envy and malice, and not for Gods glory; ſee how God requites them with the like doom they had paſſed upon him, *v.* 23. In 1 *Reg.* 21. Obſerve there how Queen *Jezebel*, that queen, that accurſed covetous hypocrite, under pretence of an holy faſt, had plotted by a falſe accuſation, to take away at once her innocent neighbours, both Land and Life; but for that fact, God made Dogs-meat of her, *v.* 23. And will no doubt of all ſuch, as ſhall ſo ſell themſelves to work wickedneſs. In the ſtory of *Suſanna* we read, that two Elders (whether Lay, or Clergy, I need not ſay,) becauſe ſhe would not yeeld to their unlawfull deſires, went about by a falſe accuſation to put her to death, but God rais'd up a *Daniel* to diſcover the deviliſh plot, to ſet the ſackleſs free, and to make the falſe witneſſes their own tongues to deſtroy themſelves, *v.* 62. In *Eſther.* 3. Ambitious *Haman*, by a falſe information, and a monyed temptation, had prevailed with the King againſt the poor innocent Jewes to deſtroy them, but God diſcovered his falſe and malicious plot, and withall paid him home in his own coyn, for he was hang'd on the ſame accurſed Tree, he had cauſed to be ſet up for others, as you may ſee in *Eſther* 7.10. Thus while men to ſatisfie their pride, malice, and covetouſneſs, are cunningly digging a pit for others, they fall into it themſelves. God forbid I ſhould Judge any man, but if there be any ſuch deſperate wretches, either in Church or Common-weal, though

though they dig as deep as hell, to hide their damnable plots, yet let them know, that the eye of that all-seeing God, that abhors all false wayes, will find them out to their utter confusion in the end. Let them consider, what a wiser King than *Ahasuerus* saith, *Prov.* 19. 5. *A false witness shall not go unpunished, and he that speaketh lies, shall not escape*; but be punished according to that Royall Law of like for like, as you may see in *Deut.* 19. 15 *One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth; at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established. If a false witness rise up against any man to testifie against him that which is wrong, Then both the men between whom the controversie is, shall stand before the Lord, before the Priests, and the Judges which shall be in those dayes. And the Judges shall make diligent inquisition; and behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsly against his Brother: Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his Brother. So shalt thou put the evill away from among you*, &c. A dangerous thing then (ye see) it was in old time to raise a false report, and to lay against our Brethren a false accusation; And can it be less dangerous now? yea, may some say, for that *Lex talionis* is abrogated by Christ, *Matth.* 5. 38, &c. Be not deceived, our Saviour there speaks of private revenge, and not of publick Justice; to shew how patient and loth we should be to revenge, not that we should put up all maner of injuries, & evils whatsoever, without seeking any remedy at all at the hands of Gods Ministers, who bear not the sword in vain. It is true indeed, this *Lex talionis* mentioned by *Moses*, takes not place against such as offend of ignorance, errour, or inconsideration; but against such as intentionally, maliciously, and determinately do raise up false reports against their Neighbours, and swear them; which is a most grievous and insufferable sin. First, because it is a wilfull

wilfull contempt of Gods truth, and Religion in ſelf. Secondly, becauſe the party ſo offending doth not only ſhew, but withall execute the utmoſt of his malice and hatred, ſo far as he durſt, againſt his Neighbour. Thirdly, becauſe ſuch falſe reports and accuſations do directly tend to the utter overthrow of all common Juſtice, and humane ſociety. And therefore *æquiſſimum eſt* (ſaith a learned *Caſuiſt*) it ſeems moſt equall and juſt, that he who thus offends, ſhould ſuffer the ſame puniſhment he thought by falſe accuſation to bring upon the innocent. And that for theſe Reaſons: Firſt, becauſe it is a Law, by the confeſſion of all, moſt juſt and equall, That he who ſheddeth mans blood, by man ſhould his blood be ſhed, *Gen.* 9. 6. And truly he that by falſe and malicious reports, goes about to take away his Neighbours good name, doth as much as in him lies, endeavour to ſhed his Brothers blood. Secondly, becauſe the juſtice of the puniſhment, which conſiſts in its proportion to the fault, is in this law clearly declared. Laſtly, becauſe the obſervation of this Law, *Talionis*, tends to this end, That thoſe who plot ſuch wickedneſs, and yet abhorre the puniſhment ſo grievous, might be admoniſhed of the heynouſneſs of the crime, and ſo deterred from committing the ſame.

Ameſius. If the equity of this law were obſerved, Miniſters and others ſhould not be ſo meleſted, nor Magiſtrats ſo abuſed with falſe and unneceſſary complaints as now they are.

And now let all Slanderers that wittingly and wilfully raiſe up againſt their Neighbours falſe reports; Let all Judges and Cenſors, that either for malice, favour, or bribes condemn the innocent; In a word let all Malignants or malicious corrupters, either of Judge or Witneſſes, ſadly conſider this, and withall tremble, for they being all guilty of the ſame crime, to the hurt of their Neighbour, are all involved in the ſame puniſhment of this Law, of like for like. And now that we may handle this point the more diſtinctly and ſatisfactorily, becauſe it is (as it were) the *Primum mobile*, the firſt wheel that

moves

moves, and movesall the reſt. Let us enquire of theſe two things,

1. What it is to raiſe a falſereport, or when a man is ſaid to ſlander or make a falſe accuſation againſt his neighbours.

2. When, and how, it is lawfull to diſcover our Neighbours faults, and to inform againſt them to authority. For the firſt, a man is ſaid to ſlander, or to raiſe a falſe report, when he doth either in publick, or private, unjuſtly violate the fame or good name of his Neighbour; And this ſin doth *Recipere magis & minùs*, it is greater or leſſer according to the matter, and manner of the ſcandall, and according to the intention of the ſlanderer, and quality of the party ſlandered. Secondly, a man is ſaid to ſlander or raiſe a falſe report, when without ſufficient cauſe he diſcovers the ſecret faults of his Neighbour to his prejudice and defamation, which in Charity he might and ought to have concealed. Thirdly he is ſaid to ſlander his Neighbour, &c. That without juſt cauſe doth tell abroad words or things tending to his Neighbours diſcredit, which he hath received only by tradition or hear-ſay, without any certain teſtimony, or aſſeveration; when (I ſay) he doth this to make people believe it, or but vehemently ſuſpect it. Again, when a man tells any thing thats falſe againſt his Neighbour, though he thinks it to be true, he ſlanders, and lyes againſt him materially. If he tells any thing that is true againſt his Neighbour, and yet think that it is falſe, or not true, he ſlanders and lyes againſt him formally. But if he tells any thing that is falſe againſt his Neighbour, and thinks with all that it is falſe, he ſlanders and lyes againſt him both formally and materially; and ſo he is a full and perfect falſe accuſer.

Again (and I pray mark it) if our Neighbours faults may be amended by a private Brotherly admonition betwixt party and party, and his crimes be not pernicious, and the end of accuſation may be had without publick accuſation, (in which caſe both Charity and Juſtice re-

quire our passing by an offence) then *dicere Ecclesiæ*, to tell it to the Church, or to accuse him openly before Authority, is to slander him, or to make a false information or accusation against him. If a man shall publish his Neighbours fault to the hurt of his soul, prejudice of his body, honour or estate, without just cause, he sins both against Justice and Charity, and so is guilty of false accusation. In a word, he is an unjust accuser that shall calumniate, or lay that which is false to a mans charge, or that useth cunning, fraud, or deceit in his Oath or accusation, or that without just cause shall make a tergiversation, and desist from a just accusation. Thus you see in briet what it is to raise a false report, or to make a false accusation against our Neighbour.

Let such swearers and accusers note this.

Quacunque a te verborum quis juret, Deus tamen qui conscientia testis est, ita hoc accipit, sicut ille cui juratur intelligit.

Isidor. *de Summo bono. lib.* 1.

Now for the other, When, and how, it is lawfull to discover our Neighbours faults, and to inform against him to Authority?

Although it be lawfull in silence to conceal sometimes the truth, when neither piety nor charity require us to reveal it, as *Matth.* 26. 63. for the precept affirmative of telling the truth, binds not *ad semper*, at all times, but as the reason of circumstances well considered do require; so also of concealing part of the truth, as you may see, *Jer.* 38. 26. &c. Yet when the secret sin or fault of our Neighbour is like to bring great damage to others, and danger to himself that commits it, we are bound in charity, not to conceal it, but to make it known to Authority for prevention. Also when his faults are publick either by the sentence of the Judge, or evidence of his notorious fact, then we may speak of them, and condemn them openly; for the offender hath then lost his right to a good name.

Again when wicked men by their dissembled iniquity, or feigned shew of vertue, or piety get unto themselves a good name, to the manifest danger of others, then it is lawfull to inform against them, and to lay them open. To conclude, there are many cases, in which it is

not

not only lawfull, but alſo neceſſary to inform againſt, and accuſe offenders. As for inſtance, Officers are bound by their office, as often as occaſion ſerves, to inform againſt, and accuſe offenders, for the promotion of the publick good. Secondly, Each privat man ought to make offences and offenders known, which either immediatly hinder the publick good, or mediatly tend to the publick hurt, or do intollerably wrong any particular innocent man, if ſuch an evill cannot by any other means conveniently be avoyded; becauſe, both by the law of nature, and charity, every one is bound either for the Common-wealth, or his Neighbours good, to lay out his beſt endeavours, when need requires, to remove or prevent ſuch evills by timely information, and that too without any private Brotherly premonition; (I ſay) without any private premonition; for when the ſcandall is publick, ſo publick, that it cannot be taken off by any privat correction, and when there is no hope to prevail in a privat way; or if the Common-wealths danger be ſuch by that ſin, that its ſafety by a privat admonition cannot be defended or preſerved, then without any more adoe, *Dic Eccleſiæ*, tell it to the Church, complain of it to Authority; but withall be ſure the main end and aym of thy complaint, be not any ſiniſter end of thine own, but Gods Glory, and his Churches good: ſo ſhalt thou do good ſervice to them both. And thus I have now done with the *Informers*, in theſe words, *Thou ſhalt not raiſe a falſe report.*

I come now to ſpeak unto you, that are *Witneſſes*, in the words enſuing,

Put not thine hand with the wicked, to be an unrighteous witneſs.

I Cannot, I need not be large upon this, for what I have ſaid already of falſe Reporters and accuſers, may ſuffice alſo for falſe witneſſes. If any deſire to know more fully concerning this point, let them conſult their Catechiſms, eſpecially *Pareus* his Expoſition of the nineth Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy*

neighbour, where (as both he, and *Ursin* that solid Divine cote ch) is required, That we speak nothing that is false, nor any thing falsly, against our neighbour. That we do not calumniate any mans words, detract from any mans worth, or any way defame them. That we Judge not rashly of any, nor condemn any *Indictâ causâ*, before the matter is heard. That we flee, and keep our selves cleer with all possible care, from all lies, especially, pernicious ones, and from all deceit. In judgements and all other matters, that we follow, and keep close to the truth. That we defend, preserve, and advance as much as in us lies, the just fame, good name, and welfare of our Neighbour. The truth of God, and our Neighbours good (you see) are the main end, aym, and scope of this Commandement; And therefore the Devill and wicked men (his factors) do lye and bear false witness, even when they speak the truth; because they are neither φιλαλήθεις, nor φιλάνθρωποι, Lovers neither of truth nor true men, but false accusers of the Brethren. If they speak at any time the truth, it is *animo fallendi*, with an intention to deceive, not to glorifie God, or to doe men any good. *Put not thy hand with the wicked, &c.* As we are bound to witness the truth, when we are lawfully called thereunto by the Magistrat, or freely of our own accords, though we be not constrained by Authority, if there be any grievous damage, or danger like to fall upon the publick-weal, or any privat innocent man, which otherwise cannot be avoyed or prevented, *Pro.* 24. 11. So we must have a great care when we come to witness, that neither for fear, nor favour, nor any other sinister end, we bear false witness against our brother. Perjury is a fearfull sin; to contemn God, and Religion, to renounce thy Saviour and all the means of salvation, to overthrow and confound, as much as in thee lies, all common justice and humane society, is the very height of impiety, and such a sin as this is, alas! what can expiate? I beseech you turn to *Malachi* 3. 5. read there and tremble, or at leastwise consider

ſider ſeriouſly and ſadly of it, before you lay your hands upon the Book; I will come near to you to Judgment, and will be a ſwift witneſs againſt falſe ſwearers &c. and ſuch as fear not me ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.

I ſhall now conclude this point with that of St. *Aug.* in his Sermon, on the beheading of *John Baptiſt, Ille qui hominem provocat ad jurationem, &c.* He that wittingly and wilfully provokes a man to take an Oath falſely, *Homicidam ſuperat*, is worſe than a manſlayer, for the one kills but the body, the other murders the ſoul, nay, two ſoules at once, both the falſe witneſſes, and his own. I would to God ſuch (if ſuch there be) that cloſely and ſecretly (as if they had no hand in the matter) ſet poor ignorant men (or ſuch as they cannot but know to be deſperate wretches) on work to inform, and do animate them on to take falſe Oathes againſt their Paſtors, and other innocent Brethren, to bring about their own moſt baſe and corrupt ends, would before it be too late, conſider better of the words of this good old Father, Leſt they bring both the guilt and puniſhment of this ſo horrid a crime, upon their own wretched ſouls; which no pretence of Gods glory, or the Churches good, will ever be able to palliate or wipe off.

A word now or two beloved to you *The Reverend Judges and Cenſors* of the matters, and but a word, for that to the wiſe is ſufficient.

You ſhall not follow a multitude to do evill; neither ſhall you ſpeak in a Cauſe to decline after many to wreſt Judgment.

There are ſome (ſaith one) that being ſhallow themſelves, do ſail by anothers compaſs, and ſide with the moſt, though not the beſt, to the prejudice of the truth, and the wreſting of Judgment againſt the innocent. But I hope you are all ſo wel qualified, as you need not fear the danger that may follow upon ſuch a want, ſuch a ſin. I cannot, I need not tell you your office in every point, yet let me crave leave to remember you of your duty, in this one in my Text, *viz.* That you wreſt not Judgement.

Ignorantia Judicis plerumque eſt calamitas innocentis. Aug de Ci. Dei lib. 29.

now

Now Judgment is wreſted many wayes; I ſhall inſtance but in ſome. Firſt, When Judges proceed by wicked Lawes, repugnant to the Lawes of God; ſee *Iſaiah* 10. 1. The Judgment of ſuch is vain; *omnium Legum eſt inanis cenſura, niſi Divinæ legis imaginem gerat*, ſaith St. Aug. *lib.* 9. *de Civit. Dei.* Judges by their offices are the Miniſters of God, *Cuſtodeſque Decalogi*, and the Keepers of his Law, *Deut.* 1. 17. and therefore according to that, and not contrary unto it, they ought to proceed.

Secondly, Judgment is wreſted by a corrupt προσωποληψία, reſpect of Perſons, when (as the Hebrews ſay) Judges look upon a mans face (i) regard the perſon of a man, for his honour, power, riches, friendſhip and the like, more than the cauſe; when they condemn the innocent to ſatisfie the deſire of the malicious Accuſer, either for fear, favour, or filthy lucre, or when they favour and acquit the guilty for the like ſiniſter ends, at the requeſt of ſome *Ageſilaus*, who wrote thus to the Judge, in behalf of his friend, If this man be not guilty, *pro Juſtitia*, but if otherwiſe, *pro amicitia abſolve.* But this is a fearfull ſin, though too common, beware of it, for the Judge of Heaven and Earth abhors it, and ſeverely forbids it, *Jam.* 2. 9. *Deut.* 1. 17. *Ye ſhall not reſpect perſons in judgment, but ye ſhall hear the ſmall as well as the great, you ſhall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is Gods.* Conſider beloved, that Judges, they repreſ nt the perſon of God, & therefore like God, they ſhould be free from paſſion & perſonal acceptation.

Laſtly, many wreſt Judgment by tricks and quillits, ſhifts, demurs, and delayes, for bribes or the like baſe ends. A gift ſaith *Salomon* blindeth the eyes of the wiſe. Such as will not ſee to do juſtice, it is juſt they ſhould never ſee to find mercy.

Juſtice in ancient time was painted without Eyes and Hands; ſure it was, to put Judges in minde, neither to reſpect perſons, nor to finger bribes.

O beloved! Let us keep innocency and do the thing that is righ', for that ſhall bring a man peace at the laſt; when

all

all the power, and friends, and means of this world (had a man them all at command) shall stand him in no stead.

I shall now advise you, but in two or three things more, and then have done that you may begin.

First, meddle not with the Oath *ex officio*; because it hath been both in the High Commission, and hellish Inquisition, the impulsive cause of much desperate perjury. Neither is it (as I conceive) according to Law, that a man should be forced to swear against, or accuse and condemn himself.

Secondly, be not too Rigid, or inquisitive after secret or doubtfull things, beware of censuring such; Hear what Christ himself saith in such a case, *Judge not*, Matth. 7. 1. Judge nothing saith the Apostle (also) before the time, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. And you know it is a Rule, *De occultis, non judicat Ecclesia*; for secret things belong not unto man, but onely unto God, *Deut.* 29. 29. Neither let light suspicions, or bare informations onely, be any sufficient grounds for your proceedings in Judgement. But censure *secundum allegata, & probata*, unless you your selves know for certain, that what is alleged, and sworn, is false; And then it were more safe to desert your places, than to pass sentence against your consciences.

Hoc loco nihil aliud Præcipi existimo, nisi ut ea facta quæ dubium est quo animo fiant, in meliorem partem interpretemur. Aug. *in ser. in mont.* Mat. 7.

And now let me be bold to make one motion in behalf of our Spirituall brethren, who perhaps have been overtaken by some temptation, or are fallen through infirmity; at which their spitefull prosecutors, or persecutors rather, do greedily take advantage to aggravate them even to enormities for the accomplishment of their own vile ends. It is this; That you would be pleased to tender their persons and callings; and to deal with them according to the Apostles rule in such a case, *Gal.* 6. 1. Even to restore such with the Spirit of meekness, considering your selves, least ye be also tempted. Or let the charge against them be what it will, yet receive it not, under the precise number of three, or two competent witnesses at the least, 1 *Tim.* 5. 19. For it is a dangerous

Ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος. thing

thing to receive, as well as to raise a false accusation, or an accusation falsly, As the first words of my text import.

But if the parties accused be such as are incorrigible, and hate to be reformed, then (I conceive) they have lost their right to the preaching of the word of God, *Psal.* 50. 16, *&c.* and are become insufferable evils, for whom no good man can dare to plead, Against such *Curret Lex, ne pereat grex*, let the Law proceed, least in sparing the bad, ye should endanger the precious souls of the people of God.

Lastly, yet, because in the exercise of mercy we come neerest unto God; Nay, because the very Law it self of God is charity; In your Judgements therefore, let me remember you to think on Mercy. Not to Judge *secundum literam*, according to the bare letter, and rigour of the Law, for so, *summum jus est summa injuria*, but *secundum æquum*, the equity of the Law, the principall end and aim, both of the Law, and Law-giver himself. Laws saith *Ulpianus*, were invented and ordained, not for the destruction of men, so much as for the reformation of their offences. Beloved, I desire not, but that ye should be zealous for the Lord in correcting sin, yea, that your zeal may be even exemplar, and as transcendently glorious as Jehu's, 2 *Reg.* 10. 16. yet withall forget not to be mercifull; *David* sang of both, and I hope you will now exercise both; It is safer erring on the right hand, than the left, (yourknow my meaning) to exceed in mercy, than severity, But howsoever, be sure to beware of cruelty, and think of Saint *James* his words, when you are a Judging, *Jam.* 2. 13. *The unmercifull shall have Judgment without mercy.* But withall again forget not my Text, That you decline not after many to wrest Judgment.

Lex Dei Charitas est. Aug. *in lib. de spiritu & litera.* *Nimia justitia interrit peccatum* Aug. *de vera Reli.*

Nullum omnipotenti Deo tale est sacrificium quale est zelus animarum Greg. *in* Ezek. Ho. 12.

The Supream Judge of all, from whose Tribunall can be nne appeal, his Caveat to the Judges in Israel, shall be the closure of my charge to you all, in 2 Chro. 19. 6. *Take heed what ye do, for yee Judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the Judgment; which that you may do to his Glory, the Churches good, and the safety of your own soules, the Lord for his mercies sake grant. To whom be all honour and glory world without end. Amen.*

FINIS.

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